

TWENTY BUSY DAYS

67

"Lay down your arms!" Imre Nagy urged over Radio Budapest, promising to establish a popular front government. The rebels refused.

"Soldiers remain loyal to your government," Radio Budapest pleaded, almost in frenzy. "Please help us . . . Gero is gone. Nagy is back. He will create a new order!"

* * *

26 Oct 56

From nine o'clock to 10:42 A.M. in Washington, I presided over the 201st meeting of the National Security Council.

That morning we had a scattering of reports from around the globe, all disquieting. There were rumors—which turned out to be false—of the assassination of the King of Jordan; news of riots in Singapore and of serious unrest in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. But the compelling news continued to be Hungary.

Allen Dulles reported on the entry of Soviet troops before dawn the preceding Wednesday, the desertion of Hungarian troops, the alleged desertion of some Russian tanks, the fighting in the streets of Budapest. This information, Mr. Dulles said, came in a cable from Budapest which the author wrote lying on the floor to keep from getting shot.

Whereas Tito—and the Red Chinese also—approved of the Polish stand, Mr. Dulles went on, both had kept silent on the subject of Hungary. "The Chinese Communists," he said, "may not be unhappy over what's happening in Hungary. If so, we might at this moment be seeing the beginning of the first rift between China and the U.S.S.R."

"What was the Czech reaction?" I asked, and Mr. Dulles replied, "We have very little information out of Czechoslovakia. Chip Bohlen recently saw Bulganin and Khrushchev together at a reception in Moscow. Khrushchev, he said, had never looked so grim. His days may well be numbered."

Allen Dulles speculated. "Possibly it will fall to Zhukov to choose his successor; in fact, Zhukov himself may succeed Khrushchev."

We knew this was a dangerous moment—that the Communist leaders in Moscow were doubtless searching their souls for answers to painful questions:

Could they permit a Gomulka to rule in Poland after what happened in Hungary? Could they permit a loosening of control in the satellites, or had the time come to return to the iron-fisted techniques of Stalinist rule?

"I doubt that the Russian leaders genuinely fear an invasion by the West," I told the members of the Council. "But with the deterioration of the Soviet Union's hold over its satellites might not the Soviet Union be tempted to resort to extreme measures, even to start a world war? This possibility we must watch with the utmost care."

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At that date, we had a report from an Austrian businessman who had fled from Budapest to Vienna, that already as many as five thousand had died, and that "the whole town echoes with artillery fire."

I rode the train to New York, Premier Imre Nagy was announcing Radio Budapest that he would open negotiations with the Russians. Withdrawal of Soviet troops as soon as order returned. He promised amnesty for rebels who would quickly surrender. The rebels refused and a general strike.

* * *

Accord in the Middle East

That day Jordan, Egypt, and Syria announced the signing of the "peace" man, which provided that (1) they would increase their military forces and (2) in the event of a war with Israel, would place their forces under an Egyptian commander. This pact, Ben-Gurion said, put Israel in "direct and immediate danger."

* * *

Four o'clock in New York, I greeted a number of groups representing Americans of various extraction—Negro, Italian, Puerto Rican, Arab, Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish, Slavic, Greek, Hungarian—and eight thirty my wife and I left the Commodore Hotel for Madison Garden for a major speech in the '56 campaign. Crowds thronged the rafts and filled the Garden to the rafters.

At 3:35 the evening I left Madison Square Garden for La Guardia and shortly after ten was back aboard the presidential plane to return to Washington.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26

Hungarian Fighting Continues

On the 26th, Belgian diplomats who had fled from Budapest to Vienna reported that the rebels controlled all of western Hungary; that an soldier, who had torn the red stars from their caps, controlled the streets out of Budapest, and that "freedom stations" had begun broadcasting.

On October 31 *Pravda* published an astonishing and seemingly contradictory "Declaration by the Soviet Government on the Principles of Development of the Relations between the Soviet Union and the Peoples of the West and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States."

Meanwhile, in the British House of Commons, the Laborites condemned their onslaught against the government. Hugh Gaitskell called the

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could "build their mutual relations only on the
principles of complete equality."

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Egypt Regroups

Egypt broke its diplomatic ties with Britain and France; Nasser ordered the bulk of Egyptian forces withdrawn from the Sinai Peninsula to fight the British and French in defense of the Canal.

In the House of Commons Anthony Eden pleaded that Britain and France would welcome eventual United Nations control of the Suez area but only after Israeli and Egyptian forces had been separated and peace had been restored. The Laborites called for a vote of censure. Bitter debate followed, with Gaitskell and Bevan heading the attack. The certain motion failed 324 to 255.

* * *

At nine o'clock that morning a meeting in my office began with an intelligence review by Allen Dulles. "The occurrences in Hungary," he said, "are a miracle. They have disproved that a popular revolt can occur in the face of modern weapons. Eighty per cent of the Hungarian Army has defected. Except in Budapest, even the Soviet troops have shown no stomach for shooting down Hungarians."

The problem in Hungary, he concluded, was the lack of a strong guiding authority for the rebels; Imre Nagy was failing, and the rebels were demanding that he resign. Cardinal Mindszenty, if supported by the Roman Catholic ardor of the Hungarian people, was a possible leader. Newspapers that morning were reporting his release from house arrest and his return to Budapest.

Turning to the Middle East, Foster Dulles reviewed the history of recent weeks. Much of what he said was an estimate only because of our having been practically cut off from normal diplomatic connections with Britain and France, except for my personal communications with Eden.

He referred to the vast increase in diplomatic traffic between France and Israel. Then, he said, "Israel mobilized and struck. We believed that Israel would attack Jordan, not Egypt," he said. "The Anglo-Jordanian treaty probably prevented that attack and caused Britain, France, and Israel to agree on an Israeli strike against Egypt and on the British and French use of this strike as a pretext to protect the Canal. In all probability," the Secretary went on, "these moves were concerted; the French did the planning, the British acquiesced, and the French, in violation of the 1950 agreement, covertly supplied the Israelis with arms."

Under the rules of the United Nations, he continued, if a veto pre-

action by the Security Council, the General Assembly can be convened within twenty-four hours. The Assembly could therefore meet that afternoon at five.

"It is nothing less than tragic," he concluded, reminding us all of a similar fact, "that at this very time, when we are on the point of winning an immense and long-hoped-for victory over Soviet colonialism in Europe, we should be forced to choose between following in the footsteps of Anglo-French colonialism in Asia and Africa, or sending us away from their course. Yet this decision must be made in a matter of hours—before five o'clock this afternoon."

We could not permit the Soviet Union to seize the leadership in the struggle against the use of force in the Middle East and thus the emergence of the new independent nations of the world. But on the other hand I by no means wanted the British and French to be branded as world aggressors without provocation. I therefore instructed Foster to make two statements: an announcement of our suspension of all military aid to the government of Israel; and a moderate resolution for submission to the General Assembly in an effort to break a deadlock—certain to be an objectionable one—by the Soviet Union.

At 11:10 Foster telephoned me to read the draft text of our statement of mild sanctions against Israel. It seemed satisfactory to me. I then asked him to send the text of our proposed United Nations resolution to the Lodge at once so that he could rally support for it before Secretary Acheson would personally present it to the General Assembly later that day. The resolution called for an immediate cease-fire, withdrawal of all troops behind the armistice lines, a ban on all military shipments into the area of hostilities, and action to open the Canal.

That night, with a feeling of relief, I delivered my final platform speech at the campaign in Philadelphia. I canceled the rallies still on my calendar.

Speaking about the tangled situation that had developed out of Middle East difficulties, I said:

We cannot—in the world, any more than in our own nation—subscribe to one law for the weak, another law for the strong; . . .

There can be only one law—or there will be no peace. . . .

We value—deeply and lastingly—the bonds with those great nations Britain and France, those great friends, with whom we now so vainly struggle. And I, for one, am confident that those bonds will endure and survive. They can—my friends, they must—grow to new and greater strength.

But this we know above all: there are some firm principles that cannot bend—they can only break. And we shall not break ours.

White House staff. We discussed a proposed White House statement in reply to the Bulganin note.

"This statement," I said, "ought to include a clear warning—a passage that would make it unmistakably clear that the United Nations, including the United States, would oppose with force any attempt to violate the UN plan for getting a cease-fire. The Soviets," I went on, "seeing their failure in the satellites, might be ready to undertake any wild adventure . . . [they] are as scared and furious as Hitler was in his last days. There's nothing more dangerous than a dictatorship in that frame of mind."

Accordingly, the White House statement called the Soviet plan for joint American-Soviet action "unthinkable," and warned that the entry of any new troops into the Middle East would oblige all members of the United Nations, including the United States, to take effective countermeasures.

In England, Eden also rejected Bulganin's threats, asked him to support the proposal for a United Nations police force, and proceeded to deliver a scathing attack on the hypocrisy of the Soviet Union's coming as a peacemaker into the Middle East while its hands were still stained with Hungarian blood.

* * *

Throughout the campaign Governor Stevenson had declined to touch what he must have considered a politically powerful argument in his favor: my health. On election eve, reportedly against the advice of some of his aides, he raised the issue, pointing out the "scientific evidence" that I couldn't last another four years, and declaring that he "recoiled" at the thought of Richard Nixon's directing the destiny of America and serving as guardian of the hydrogen bomb.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Increased Fighting

It was Election Day. Israel's part in the fighting had ended. But in the early morning hours, additional British assault forces from Malta were landing at Port Said, and running into heavy Egyptian fire. French commandos landed at Port Fuad, meeting no resistance.

In Washington at a meeting which began at 8:37 A.M., Allen Dulles gave me late intelligence reports. The Soviet Union had told the Egyptians, he believed, that they would "do something" in the Middle East

and speculated that they might try to stage fighter planes into Egypt. I told Allen Dulles to order high-altitude reconnaissance flights over Israel and Syria to see whether Soviet planes and pilots had landed at Syrian air bases. "Our people should be alert in trying to determine Soviet intentions," I said. "If the Soviets should attack Britain and France directly, we would of course be in a major war."

Later in the morning, my wife and I drove the eighty miles to Gettysburg to vote.

I returned to Washington at about noon by helicopter. Andy Goodwater met me at the airfield and reviewed the major developments on the way in to the White House—particularly the prospects for a cease-fire, and intelligence reports received during the morning of jet aircraft and unknown nationality overflying Turkey. (Later reports had not confirmed these overflights, although all intelligence agencies continued to be particularly watchful.)

In an immediate meeting in the White House Cabinet Room, Admiral Radford said the Joint Chiefs had been reviewing our military state of readiness and had concluded that measures for its improvement, as I had stated, were indicated. He read off a list of twenty or thirty steps of character.

"These," I said, "should be put into effect by degrees—not all at once in order to avoid creating a stir. Units can be put on alert, and the number of ships and aircraft on ready status should be increased."

Though I questioned whether movements should be started to the Persian Gulf and other areas, and though many of the measures were simple and precautionary, I believed that we should progressively achieve an alert state of readiness, starting the next morning. Many precautions might well escape notice but I suggested that the military services might call back personnel from leave, an action impossible to conceal which would let the Russians know—without being provocative—that we would not be taken by surprise.

In the course of the meeting, Admiral Radford remarked, "It is very hard to figure out the Russian thinking in connection with their proposals for them to attempt any operations in the Middle East would be extremely difficult, militarily. The only reasonable form of intervention would be long-range air strikes with nuclear weapons—which seems unlikely."

His reasoning proved sound.

Meanwhile British forces were reaching El Cap, twenty-three miles west of Port Said, and they and the French were claiming control of the Canal area. At the very moment we were meeting in the White

any resentments and suspicions directed toward him. Indeed, a press survey in Britain during the last week of July 1957, showed an astonishing amount of public belief that the American oil companies were indirectly behind the rebellion. This was absurd, but the belief was strong to die.

Toward the end of July the British decided it was necessary to use ground forces to suppress the rebellion. The operation itself was conducted by a handful of troops and was completed in several days, during which little actual fighting took place. King Saud sent a message assuring me that he was not supplying the arms to the rebels; these, he claimed, were obtained under an agreement between Nasser and Nehru. The King cited no proof of this claim but, immediately, I notified Harold Macmillan, who was highly gratified by this indication that King Saud did not wish to build the incident into a major quarrel between Saudi Arabia and Britain. Assuring Harold of the falsity of any rumors involving United States oil companies I wrote, "If we were willing to tolerate this kind of thing, we would never have been so ready to do our best to help solve the oil problems that were generated for you by the Suez crisis of last fall."

Finally the Sultan of Muscat and Oman who, like the British, had been deeply suspicious of King Saud, agreed to meet with the latter. There the incident ended, but it has always remained in my mind as an example of the inflammatory possibilities of even the smallest clash in that combustible part of the world.

* * *

As one ended, another crisis promptly made its appearance. On August 13, 1957, the Syrian radio blared forth an accusation that the United States was engaged in a plot to overthrow the Kuwatly regime there, and that three United States embassy and attaché officials in Damascus were to be expelled for alleged subversive activities. A few days later the Syrian Army Chief of Staff, a political moderate, resigned his position and his important post was taken over by an officer known to be pro-Moscow in sympathies.

The entire action was shrouded in mystery but the suspicion was strong that the Communists had taken control of the government. Moreover, we had fresh reports that arms were being sent into Syria from the Soviet bloc.¹³

¹³ These events did not come as a complete surprise. As early as the previous January, Allen Dulles had submitted reports indicating that the new Syrian Cabinet was oriented to the left, with the strong man of the Cabinet appearing to be Khaled el

In the days following the revolt and the propaganda attack on the United States, we tried, through the heavy yoke of censorship (which even included a Syrian security detachment surrounding the United States Embassy), to find out how far toward Communism the Syrian government had swung. If the government comprised only radical Arab nationalists and pro-Nasserites, that was one thing; if they were to go completely Communist, that could call for action.

Syria's neighbors believed that the pendulum had swung far toward the danger point. Almost immediately the Middle East broke into a diplomatic furor approaching panic. There were meetings between the Turks and Iraqis; the Iraqis and Jordanians; the Jordanians and the Turks. Lebanon, already overrun with Syrian agents, asked the United States for formal assurances of support in the event that Lebanon were attacked by Syria. Even President Kuwatly of Syria seemed shaken by the rapidity of the events in his own land; apparently fearful of his own future, he hurried off to Egypt to consult with President Nasser. Although the suddenness of the Syrian action had apparently startled Nasser (it was reported that he regarded the chief of staff of the Syrian army as an out-and-out Communist), he still found it necessary to join publicly with Syria in denouncing the alleged "U.S. plot to overthrow the Syrian regime."

In the United States we were determined not to make premature public commitments on insufficient information. One clear fact was emerging, however. Syria's neighbors, including her fellow Arab nations, had come to the conclusion that the present regime in Syria had to go: otherwise a takeover by the Communists would soon be complete. A strong Soviet outpost would be in existence amidst this formerly neutral region.¹⁴

In these circumstances most Middle East countries seemed to believe that direct military action would be necessary. This would have to take place, they said, before the Syrians and Soviets had a chance to sign a mutual defense treaty or before Syria was recognized officially as a Communist satellite. No military action should be initiated

Arabi, the Minister of State, who was known to be anti-Western and pro-Egyptian. In July the Syrians, busy at fomenting trouble with Israel and Lebanon, had received \$500 million in long-term military and economic aid from Soviet Russia. Syria was far more vulnerable to Communist penetration than was Egypt. In Egypt, where one strong man prevailed, Colonel Nasser was able to deal with Communists and accept their aid with some degree of safety simply because he demanded that all Soviet operations be conducted through himself. In Syria, where a weak man was in charge of the government, the Soviet penetration bypassed the government and dealt directly with the various agencies, the army, the foreign ministry and the political parties. Syria was considered ripe to be plucked at any time.

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came Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee in 1931, and had served as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee in every Congress controlled by the Democrats since 1949. For years he had been "Uncle Carl" to many of us; but he viewed with suspicion any proposal which might diminish the degree of control which he and his committee and the Congress exercised over military activities, many of which were matters of detail only. Recognizing my determination to bring about a modernization of Defense organization, he let it be known that he was going to try to defeat the effort.

Toward the end of February, before I gave out the details of the administration's plan, he introduced his own "reorganization" bill. Among other things it included a questionable provision limiting civilian employees in the Department of Defense to six hundred and a provision making the service Secretaries statutory members of the National Security Council.⁵ On the morning of March 28 I invited Mr. Vinson, along with two other influential members of the House Armed Services Committee, Republican Les Arends and Democrat Paul Kilday, to the White House for breakfast. We discussed the changes which I was about to propose.

"All we're trying to do," I told them, "is to set up an establishment that will function in peacetime, as it necessarily must in wartime, under the Secretary of Defense." But Mr. Vinson was unconvinced. "We're going to have trouble," I told an associate after the breakfast meeting ended, because he obviously thought that the Congress should and could control in detail every Defense activity.

On April 3 I sent to Congress a special message on the reorganization. "... separate ground, sea, and air warfare," I said at the outset, "is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight it in all elements, with all services, as one single concentrated effort. Peacetime preparatory and organizational activity must conform to this fact."

⁵ This second proposal was meaningless unless its sole purpose was to raise the "prestige" of service Secretaries. Even to this day I become alarmed by the many misconceptions about the National Security Council. These are found even among officers of the Executive branch, all of whom have every opportunity to obtain an understanding of its purpose and its functioning. These misapprehensions seem to be most noticeable in the Congress, whose members are used to the "committee" system of making decisions. Assuming that the NSC acts by committee vote, Congress is frequently impelled to add to, or subtract from, its "statutory" membership. While the NSC is authorized by law and is, when correctly employed, a vitally important body, it is only advisory in action. Its duty is to advise the President but he can use it, ignore it, meet with it personally or not in whole or in part, and can add, as he sees fit, any number of people to its membership. So Mr. Vinson's proposal of this item was of no significance whatsoever.

I included specific recommendations.

The first was the organization of all our deployed troops in unified commands, all directly responsive to their designated command. The second was the organization of the service from which the troops might come. The third was the organization of unified commands and the selection of the commanders to be under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief and with his approval.⁶

Second, I recommended that we "clear command channels" by proceeding directly to the unified commander from the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of Defense, whose operational post would be the Joint Chiefs of Staff. At that time the command ran from the President to the Secretary of Defense, the service Secretary designated as the executive agent for the theater to the service Chief of Staff, and finally to the commander in the chain "cumbersome and unreliable in time of peace and not a time of war." In addition to recommending its elimination, I asked for repeal of any statutory authority "which vests responsibilities for operations in any official other than the Secretary of Defense, Chief of Naval Operations, for example, by law commanding operating forces directly. The confusion between his authority and that of the commanders-in-chief of unified commands charged with involving forces of several services was obvious.

Third, I recommended that, as a matter of law, the Joint Chiefs could serve as a unit in assisting the Secretary of Defense to set the new unified commands, acting only under his authority. To set the Joint Staff I recommended the addition to it of an operations division and, to this end, the raising or moving of a statutory limit—then 210 officers—on the Joint Staff's size. I

Our overseas forces had operated under so-called "unified commands" in the early days of World War II. But the component units, divisions, regiments, were normally assigned to the specified commander for tactical operations. Other functions the separate services were in a controlling position. In some cases the authority sought for unified commanders was even more sweeping than that exercised over all the American Forces assigned to OVERLORD on World War II.

In my own experience in the European Theater I had found it difficult to get a loose theater organization, partly because of the spirit of cooperation in wartime and partly because I was also the administrative commander of the largest single component force in Europe, the United States Army, which was the Air Force. At SHAPE in 1951, likewise, President Truman had been to spell out that the Sixth Fleet operating in the Mediterranean was directly my command. But my experiences, I well realized, were not universal. In every instance where the term "Secretary of Defense" was used in this way it was understood to include "with the advice of the Joint Chiefs

CHAPTER XI

Landing in Lebanon

Even peace may be purchased at too high a price.

—Benjamin Franklin.

WESTERN concern about the apparently inexorable drain of Syria toward the Communist orbit during late 1957 was by no means lessened when in late January 1958 President Nasser—whose exact political leanings were still something of a mystery—announced that Egypt and Syria planned to unite, forming a new nation, the United Arab Republic.

Foster Dulles was attending a meeting of the Baghdad Pact nations in Ankara as the news broke, and the conference drew to a close in a troubled and confused atmosphere. At the start, it was unclear whether this union was prompted by Communist influence or whether the Communists were merely going along with Nasser's ambition eventually to unify the Arab world. The other Arab nations viewed the development with real anxiety.

On February 1 Nasser and President al Kuwatly of Syria signed the merger documents.

Under the arrangement, we learned, the Syrian army was to be removed from politics, Syrian political parties would be dissolved, and Communism allegedly would be suppressed.¹ All key appointments would be controlled from Cairo. The deputy director of our Central Intelligence Agency, General Charles P. Cabell, reported that the Syrian army, fearful of growing Communist influence in the country, had been a prime mover in engineering the union.

Reportedly, Nasser had at first been reluctant to enter the Syrian picture,

1 The Communist Party, active in Syria, was outlawed in Egypt.

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QUOMOY AND MATSU, 1958

And if the Nationalists win, the situation would look better.

ment of the Nationalities. The block military positions were satisfactory. I thought our military arrangements were satisfactory. But I thought our military arrangements had not yet been broken, but we were optimistic. Further, in view of the efficient communications available between the United States and Washington, I saw no need to delegate to any subordinate authority as Commander-in-Chief to commit United States forces as well as to make

... the President has not yet made any finding under that Resolution that the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States is warranted or appropriate in insuring the defense of Formosa. The President would not, however, hesitate to make such a finding if he judged that the circumstances made this necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Joint Resolution. In this connection, we have recognized that the securing of protection of Quemoy and Matsu have increasingly become related to the defense of Taiwan (Formosa). . . . Military dispositions have been initiated by the United States so that a Presidential determination if made, will be followed by action both timely and effective.

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To allay the Generalissimo's concern, however, as well as to make his position clear before the world, I approved a statement by John F. Kennedy on September 4, 1958. It presented our arguments in support of Chiang Kai-shek's legal position on Quemoy and Matsu and reiterated determination that these territories not be seized by force. The President repeated the portion of the Formosa Doctrine that authorized the intent to employ the armed forces of the United States for the protection of Taiwan and related positions and announced that . . . the President has not yet made any finding under that Resolution that the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States is warranted or appropriate in insuring the defense of Formosa. The President would not, however, hesitate to make such a finding if he judged that circumstances made this necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Revolution. In this connection, we have recognized that the securing of protecting of Quemoy and Matsu have increasingly become related to the defense of Taiwan (Formosa). . . . Military dispositions have been made by the United States so that a Presidential determination if made, will be followed by action both timely and effective.

In order to keep the door for negotiations open, however, we included the following paragraph:

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... the President has not yet made any finding under that Resolution that the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States is required or appropriate in insuring the defense of Formosa. The President would not, however, hesitate to make such a finding if he judged that circumstances made this necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Revolution. In this connection, we have recognized that the securing of Quemoy and Matsu have increasingly become related to the defense of Taiwan (Formosa). . . . Military dispositions have been made by the United States so that a Presidential determination if made, will be followed by action both timely and effective.

In order to keep the door for negotiations open, however, we in the following paragraph:

The United States has not, however, abandoned hope that ending any short of defying the will of mankind for peace. This would not be

Throughout this whole period it seems that I was continually reassured by Chiang on one side and by our own military on the other that delegation of authority for immediate action to United States commanders was in the case of attack on Formosa or the offshore islands. On September 4 and came from the Joint Chiefs of Staff asking authority for the major force to support the Chinese National Air Force in the event of an attack on the offshore islands. In potentially explosive situations and with a communications only vaguely understood, such delegations were at times in fact for this case I insisted that I would assess developments as they occurred and, I kept to myself the decision to employ U.S. forces.

the Cuban people. During the rush of these last events in the final days of 1958, the Central Intelligence Agency suggested for the first time that a Castro victory would not be in the best interests of the United States. (Earlier reports which I had received of Castro's possible Communism were suspect because they originated with people who favored Batista.)

"Communists and other extreme radicals appear to have penetrated the movement," Allen Dulles said. "If Castro takes over, they will probably participate in the government." When I heard this estimate, I was provoked that such a conclusion had not been given earlier.

One of my advisers recommended that the United States should now call Batista as the lesser of two evils. I rejected that course. If Castro turned out to be as bad as our intelligence now suggested, our only hope, I lay with some kind of non-dictatorial "third force," neither Castro nor Batistiano.

On New Year's Day 1959, Batista sought refuge in the Dominican Republic, and Fidel Castro prepared to enter Havana in triumph.

Despite our apprehensions, Castro's first moves in the new year gave observers cause to hope for the best. On January 2, for example, he announced the appointment of an acceptable Provisional President, Manuel Urrutia Lleo, who in turn a few days later appointed as President the respected Dr. José Miro Cardona.¹⁰ A group of Latin American governments had extended recognition to Castro by January 6. In the intelligence digest prepared in my office during the early part of 1959:

January 2, 1959: The Fidel Castro rebels are consolidating their control in the country. Santiago has fallen to them. An interesting facet which the State Department considers partly cheerful is the turning over of the rebel forces by Cantillo to a Colonel Ramon Barquin, who has aided the rebels in their consolidation. Favorable aspects of the turnover are that Barquin is an apparently well-thought-of officer, and (2) his opportunity to take a hand may strengthen the military's position, vis-à-vis Castro, and add a certain amount of stability to the situation. Castro is based on experienced and responsible personnel. The Communists can be expected to exploit a fast-moving situation, perhaps by supporting a forced strike.

January 6, 1959: Provisional President Urrutia established himself in the Presidential Palace in the early evening on January 5 after a delay of several hours caused by a non-Castro rebel group known as the "Liberators." The Cabinet announced on January 3, however, contains

very later Dr. Miro Cardona headed the Cuban exiles during the weeks of preparation for the invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

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to pieces. It was a moving sight to see." Nonetheless, the events of that week in May 1958 brought home to us the clear truth that, as the Vice President reported at the end of the trip, "the threat of Communism in Latin America is greater than before."

* * *

This threat, though none of us knew it at the time, was to be met into the open first, not on the Latin American mainland, but on the island of Cuba. There a bearded young man named Fidel Castro had been gathering together a band of about a thousand guerrillas in the Camaguey Mountains, a force promising to throw out the self-candid corrupt dictator Fulgencio Batista and end the suppressions and persecutions of this police state.⁸

Throughout 1958, in accordance with the charter of the OAS, the United States carefully followed a policy of non-intervention in Cuba, though sentimental support for Castro was widespread. We reported the seizure of arms headed for Castro and in March suspended the delivery of arms to Batista. We would not take sides or intervene in a new conference on November 5, 1958, except to protect American citizens in Cuba.⁹ A month later Castro launched a major attack on Santa Clara, the capital of Las Villas province in central Cuba. Batista's local forces, unable to defeat Castro, decided to join him. (Castro's struggle had been going on for years. On the 26th of July 1953, which gave his movement its name, he and a little band of followers had fully attacked the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. After a temporary years of fighting, imprisonment, and exile in Mexico, Castro returned to Cuba he hid out in the Sierra Maestra jungles, conducting intermittent guerrilla warfare. L. Matthews of the *New York Times*, having held exclusive interviews with Castro in his mountain hideout, proclaimed him "the most remarkable and original figure to arise in Cuban history since José Martí, the hero of the War of Independence." And in the absence of reports to the contrary, and the universal admiration of the Batista government, it is not surprising that large numbers of his should have echoed Matthews' views.

Castro promised free elections, social reform, schools, housing, and so on. Though some individuals, in and out of government, voiced support, the Castro movement was Communist-inspired and -supported. He was drowned out by the chorus of plaudits encouraging the "liberation." In late July of 1958 Castro's rebel forces in Oriente province threatened the supply for the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay, which came to Yacaras River, across the boundary in Cuba. The United States at once, to protect with the Cuban government, sent a contingent of Marines into Cuba to Yacaras pumping station until government soldiers, temporarily withdrawn, return to guard it.

...at last, we could give open support.

As Phoumi proceeded to retake Vientiane, General Goodpaster related the events to me. "Two points are giving us concern: the fact that Phoumi has not yet taken the airport at Vientiane, which is of great importance to the Soviets' airlift; and the fact that the pro-Communists probably advancing on Luang Prabang—the royal capital."

He then posed several questions: "First, should we seek to have our aircraft transport supplies into the area? Second, if the Thais do the job, should we use United States aircraft? Third, should we not that Thai forces seize the airfield at Vientiane and hold the airport at Luang Prabang? Finally, should we support reconnaissance of the area by Thai aircraft and of North Vietnam by United States aircraft?"

Obviously this was a time to exploit success. We had a request for aid in a legally constituted government, and the SEATO Pact committed us to preserve the security of the area of Laos. I approved the use of Thai transport aircraft and United States aircraft as well. Answers to the other questions, I said, should await further developments, but I directed an immediate check on the feasibility of using high-altitude reconnaissance equipment to reconnoiter North Vietnam.

Boun Oum and Phoumi soon entered Vientiane in triumph, and Kong Le's forces retreated north from that city.

During the next two weeks the Soviet Union flew more than 180 sorties into Laos in support of Kong Le and the Pathet Lao; it was becoming apparent that the new anti-Communist government of Boun Oum would need a great measure of outside help if it was to survive.¹³

On December 31 we held a critical conference. General Charles Cabell, Deputy Director of the CIA, reported that about fifteen hundred to twenty-five hundred troops, organized in battalions, with mortars, were moving into Laos from the direction of North Vietnam, though their exact origin was still unknown. General Lemnitzer informed us that the attached plane accredited to the Laotian government had taken pictures of the Soviets air-dropping supplies. Part of the Pathet Lao controlled a large area north of Vientiane, from which they were attacking eastward. Still another Pathet Lao force was driving westward from Sam Neua province toward Xieng Khouang. If these two forces joined, they would cut Laos in half. Finally, an attack from Phong Saly province was pushing

Souvanna Phouma, at the moment, was still in Cambodia; it was possible that he would try to set up a Communist "national front" government.

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through the fall of 1960 we studied intelligence reports day-by-day, sometimes hour-by-hour. Out of much confusion a cast of five principal characters appeared. The first two were Prince Souphanouvong, one of the pro-Communist Pathet Lao organization located primarily in the two small northeastern provinces bordering North Vietnam and China, and his half-brother, Prince Souvanna Phouma, the Prime Minister.¹¹ Then there were a paratroop captain of the army, named Kong Le, who in August of 1960 had staged a coup and thrown out the pro-Western government then in office; a minister of defense named Phoumi Nosavan, who refused to acknowledge the new—and technically legal—government under Souvanna Phouma—and continued to lead forces in opposition to both it and to the organization of Souphanouvong; and finally there was Prince Boun Oum, who in September announced that he would set up his own government to rival that of Souvanna Phouma—a government which quickly became Phoumi Nosavan's recognition and backing.

By October it appeared that Souvanna Phouma was either a puppet or a captive of Captain Kong Le who, himself, was in complete control of the Communist Pathet Lao. During the second week of October a special mission to Laos—Assistant Secretary of Defense Edwin II, and Assistant Secretary of State J. Graham Parsons—despite a great effort, to persuade Souvanna Phouma not to bring Pathet Lao into his government. By the first of December the situation was edging closer to all-out civil war, and the Soviet Union began lifting supplies to the pro-Communist Laotian forces. Then on December 8 a newcomer, Colonel Kouprasith Abhay, an associate of Phoumi, executed a coup against Souvanna Phouma's government in Vientiane. In that same day there was a second coup: Kong Le took over Vientiane. Souvanna Phouma fled to Cambodia.

On December 13 the forces of Phoumi and Kouprasith¹² together gained a counterattack on Vientiane. As the fight went on, the King

¹¹ Laos has a king who as head of state, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Supreme Religious Authority, reigns from the royal capital of Luang Prabang, a city of 8000. He appoints the Prime Minister, who is responsible to the National Assembly. This body is elected every five years by universal suffrage, and is located at the administrative capital of Vientiane (population then 100,000), further down the Mekong River. The national flag of Laos is colored red with a white elephant in the center, a fitting symbol for a country which from birth had suffered from division.

¹² Thereafter Colonel Kouprasith disappeared from public view.

Waging Peace

LANDING IN LEBANON

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Ahead, the reaction of the "neutrals" was, as expected, bitterly critical of the U.S. But there also were signs of deep uneasiness over the American decision in some pro-Western circles. West Germany, which stands on the front line of Western defense in Europe, was plainly disturbed over the danger of a general war. . . . leaders of the Laborite opposition cried "shame!" when Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd defended the U.S. . . . there were rumors that King Hussein of Jordan planned to move into Iraq to bring it back into the pro-Western camp. . . .

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A few days later, in Moscow, a large crowd gathered outside the United States Embassy and inflicted some damage, and Nasser flew to that city to confer with Khrushchev.

Confidential reports on governmental attitudes—which rarely reach the press—were pouring in from our embassies and other sources. General Goodpastor kept a running note of the intelligence material which he furnished me on a day-to-day basis. Reactions ranged all the way from gratification in Turkey and Pakistan to loud condemnation from the Soviets.

Excerpts from the reports sent to me on July 18 and 19 give a sample of intelligence coming in:

July 18—. . . Chamoun will try to clean out disloyal elements from Lebanese Army; NATO reactions to UK help to Jordan were generally favorable, with strong support by most delegates; . . . Israel welcomes US and UK intervention—will move if Hussein falls; situation in Jordan has quieted and stabilized; Egyptians profess fear of Soviet involvement, and view US warning against attack on US forces as an ultimatum; Chamoun lacks power to remove treasonable elements from his army. Reports that Soviets are reacting with intensified political and propaganda measures, but without taking commitments or without significant military moves; growing evidence that Lebanese military forces and rebels may clash with US Marines; in Iraq rebel forces seem to be in control and are consolidating their position; . . . information that Lebanese army initially intended to resist US Marines but backed down at last moment.

July 19—USSR continues political attack against Western intervention in Jordan and Lebanon; but without commitments and with very cautious statements as to action; . . . attitude of Lebanese army remains equivocal, with growing probability of terrorist attacks against American troops together with Fedayeen from Syria; Nehru appears to seek a mediatory role as in Suez and Korean crises; Turks desire to move into Iraq, and say they have decided to do so, asking US material and moral support (notably against USSR); UAR has reacted strongly against the US warning, particularly our warning against attack by forces known to be under UAR control; Yemeni reaction to the coup is mixed with ruling family showing fear of attack against themselves; Faisal stresses neutrality in Saudi Arabia,

National Security Council

Alumpi Attending Corporation Dinner in New York Hear Recommendations for Strengthening Operation of Important Governmental Agency

As Reported from the Address Made by ROBERT CUTLER

STATINTL

From
Tech. Sec. Review
March 56

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At the M.I.T. Corporation dinner, held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, on January 4, 1956, General Robert Cutler, former Special Assistant to President Eisenhower for National Security Affairs, was the final speaker. His subject, reflecting his experience in operating the National Security Council mechanism for President Eisenhower from January, 1953, to April, 1955, was this: what persons should participate in formulating recommendations concerning national security policy which are to be submitted to the President of the United States for his executive decision?

After describing the emergence of the National Security Council under the present Administration as a mechanism of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government for advising the President on matters of high policy, equal in importance to the Cabinet, he outlined the Council's characteristics, purposes, and functioning. He pointed to the limited statutory membership of the Council (five in all); named the 10 additional officials whose regular attendance at meetings President Eisenhower expected, as members, advisers, or staff; and explained that other officials, whose functions or departments had an interest in a particular agenda item or items, were also invited to attend as *ad hoc* members for such agenda item or items.

General Cutler went on to say that, if the Council were to be the forum for vigorous, searching discussion that President Eisenhower intended, there was a careful balance to be preserved between an attendance that would permit such discussion and an attendance which would turn the assemblage into a "town meeting."

He then dissected the recommendation, often made, for "strengthening the Council," that there be added as regular Council members, a few wise, broad-gauge men, divorced from operating responsibilities. In explaining why he had consistently opposed this concept, he gave as one reason for his position a concern lest the intellectual brilliance of such members coupled with their "free time to think" might tend to dominate the Council discussions. He said:

Think of a Compton, a Killian, a Robert Wilson, a James B. Conant (please let me get in one plug for Harvard), sitting every week at the Council Table, with nothing to do but think and expound. This concept is truly in the megatron range.

He then outlined his advocacy of the National Security Council seeking "outside" advice and counsel through the appointment of nongovernmental persons, on an *ad hoc* consultant basis, as advisers to the Council. He weighed the pros and cons of

using such consultants, pointing to his experiences with such advisers while he was serving with President Eisenhower. In this connection, he spoke of the Institute's contribution in these words:

Included in these consultant groups were at least two members of your Technology Faculty. Max F. Millikan, Director of Technology's Center for International Studies, headed a group that turned in a reasoned, deeply penetrating study, the concepts of which much influenced the shaping of our basic policy. Later, President Killian chaired a task force of brilliant scientists that put in months of hard thinking in sensitive areas of the greatest consequence to the survival of our American homeland. Never will your President's tact and perseverance shine to a finer advantage than they did in putting together this task force's report. To the President of the United States, as I do here to you tonight, I have paid tribute to Professor Millikan and President Killian for their wise advice in highly troubled times.

General Cutler's address dealt with the substance of a part of an article by him, "The Development of the National Security Council," which is scheduled to appear in the April issue of *Foreign Affairs*.



M.I.T. Photo

Robert Cutler (at left), consultant to the National Security Council, in informal chat with President Killian, just before the M.I.T. Corporation dinner of January 4.

MARCH, 1956

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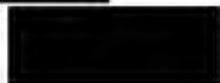
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